



316
THEODORE LANE
 The Life of an Actor 1825
 Watercolour 11.4 × 18.4 cm.

This watercolour is of the same size as the plates in "The Life of an Actor" by Pierce Egan published in 1825 with characteristic scenes by Theodore Lane. A similar scene of disaster is there captioned:

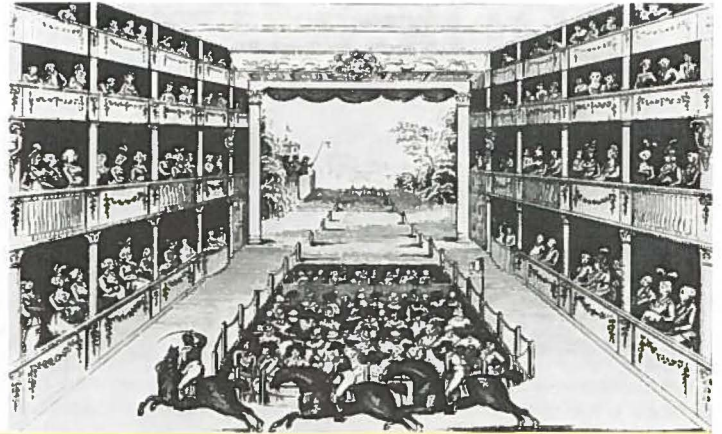
A scene not contemplated by the Author of the Play—the prompter not at his post; the

mischievous actor; the manager in grief; the performers in trouble; the audiences surprised; the curtain up before its time; the mysteries of the Art developed; and Proteus experiencing that the life of an actor is not a bed of roses.

316 is from the British Museum. Where the originals for the plates used by Pierce Egan are is not known.

308

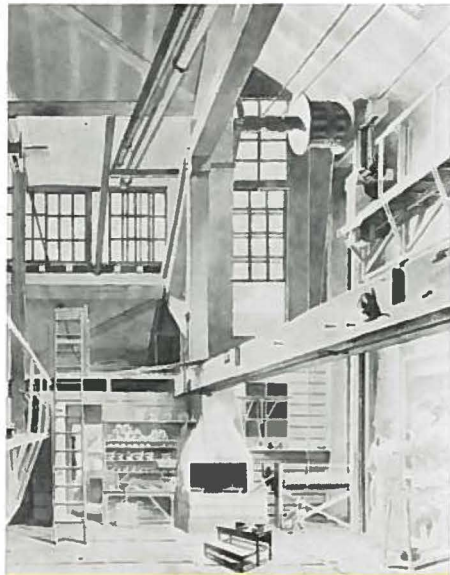
Anon
 Pony Races at the Theatre Royal, Crow Street



Dublin, 1795
 Engraving 19.7 × 12.7 cm.

Every Georgian Playhouse was an adaptable theatre in that the entire pit could be and often was floored over the stage level to provide a large assembly room. But only the Irish would find such a sporting use for what is demonstrably a multi-purpose hall if not an adaptable theatre.

308 is from the Harvard University Theatre Collection, Cambridge, Mass.



293
MICHAELANGELO ROOKER
 An Eighteenth Century Scene Designer at Work c. 1790
 Watercolour 37.0 × 30.2 cm.

In 1779 Colman engaged Rooker as a scene painter at the Haymarket Theatre and he remained there until 1797. Unfortunately no complete designs by Rooker are known to have survived.

In small figure, for book embellishment, he equalled De Louthembourg; and some of his scenery for Old Colman was quite upon a par with what that great artist had left in Garrick's theatre.

James Boaden, "Life of J. P. Kemble", 1825

This watercolour shows the scenery painter working in the paint shop or scene loft, presumably above the stage at the Haymarket, on a landscape flat. The scenery is attached to a paint frame similar in design to the paint frames used today. Cloths or flats can be raised or lowered by a winch while the scenic artist can choose either to stand on the floor or else take his paints on to a bridge which itself can be raised. At the right of the picture, above the scenic artist, can be seen a travelling bridge hauled right up while on the left hand side the bridge for a second paint frame is in the lower position.

No other representation of an English paint frame or scene room is known until 1874. 293 is from the British Museum.

330a & b
PUGIN & ROWLANDSON
 Drury Lane Theatre 1808

(a) Pencil and pen (with figures) 21.3 × 25.6 cm.
 (b) Coloured aquatint 22.9 × 28 cm.

Between 1808 and 1810 Ackermann, the print seller, published his *Microcosm of London* with 100 plates drawn by Augustus Charles Pugin, father of Pugin the architect, and Thomas Rowlandson who drew the figures and engraved the plates. For the exhibition the Art Institute of Chicago has lent the eleven original drawings for the seven theatre plates and this provides an opportunity to assess the skill of Pugin as perspective draughtsman as well as Rowlandson's unique breath of life.

This is Holland's Drury Lane of 1794 after the narrowing of the proscenium arch to a more manageable 34ft by the reinstatement, in 1797, of the proscenium and doors which Holland had somewhat prematurely removed. It was this huge theatre that provoked the remark *henceforward theatres for spectators rather than playhouses for hearers*. In 1812 Wyatt rebuilt the Lane to a new design and once again tried to exclude the doors and impose a picture frame. "Don't tell me of

frames and pictures" snorted William Dowton, the senior character actor, "If I can't be heard within the frame I will walk out of it". And out of it he came on to what remained of the Georgian forestage.

The production on stage is Kemble's **CORIOLANUS**—Act V.

